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SUBJECT: SPORADIC FIGHTING BETWEEN MAI-MAI AND RCD-G ELEMENTS IN N.KIVU

¶11. (U) Summary. Mai-Mai elements from the 8th military region have engaged in sporadic skirmishes with ex-Congolese National Army (ANC) soldiers from the same military region in Masisi, N. Kivu beginning the week of October 24th and continuing through November 7th. Although civilians have been displaced as a result of the violence there is no indication of large scale, sustained fighting. UN sources have expressed greater concern over the deteriorating security situation in Goma, including increased shootings at night, killings, and harassment of civilians by military elements. End Summary.

Sporadic Fighting Between Mai-Mai and RCD-G Elements

¶12. (U) MONUC and OCHA sources have reported sporadic fighting between Mai Mai elements led by commander Christophe of the 8th military region's 4th brigade and ex-ANC (former armed wing of the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma or RCD-G) soldiers from the 8th military region's 11th brigade headed by Colonel Bonne-Annee in the North Kivu localities of Bwerema, Bishange, and Bitonga (Masisi territory) beginning the week of October 24th and continuing periodically until November 5th. According to both sources, the confrontations are neither serious nor sustained.

¶13. (U) It is unclear at this point what has prompted the recent fighting, but MONUC sources think it may be a struggle for mineral resources in the area, along with ongoing animosity and distrust between yet to be integrated Mai-Mai and RCD-G military elements. In two related incidents, former RCD-G military investigators sent to the area were detained for 24 hours by Mai-Mai soldiers. In retaliation, 8th military region officials in Goma later arrested two Mai Mai leaders over the incident.

¶14. (U) OCHA has reported the displacement of about 3000 people in the area near Minova as a result of these conflict. As of November 8th, there is no indication of any further confrontations between these groups or of any further displacement of civilians.

¶15. (U) According to OCHA sources Mai Mai elements have also fought former ex-ANC soldiers in other parts of N.Kivu, including a minor skirmish November 3rd at the mining site of Ngara, 12 kms from Walikale, presumably for control of local mineral resources. The situation in the area, however, is now reportedly calm and many of those civilians initially displaced have already returned to their homes.

MONUC More Concerned About Increasing Violence in Goma

¶16. (U) MONUC sources have expressed greater concern over increased violence and lack of discipline by armed elements around the Goma area. This mounting insecurity has led to by increased shootings at night and a rise in acts of banditry, murders, and financial harassment of civilians; a possible indication that soldiers may not be receiving their regular salaries. Although there is no evidence at this point that any particular communities are being targeted, MONUC sources fear that incidents involving former RCD-G soldiers and Bashi civilians could lead to inter-community fighting.

Comment

¶17. (U) Sporadic low-level skirmishes between un-integrated Mai-Mai and RCD-G soldiers from the 8th military region competing for control of local mineral resources in North Kivu is likely to continue. More problematic, however, is the deterioration of the security situation in Goma and the possibility of inter-community fighting if some of the local ethnic groups feel that they are being targeted by RCD-G soldiers. It remains to be seen whether N. Kivu Governor Eugene Serufuli will take any steps to improve the security situation, or whether he will seek to manipulate events for his own ends; including the possible dismissal of 8th military region commander Obedi Rwabasira.

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